

POLIGAME

A Public Policy-Making Game

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Designed for use in Agricultural Economics 620

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POLIGAME

Section I: The Exercise and Its Objectives

POLIGAME is an exercise which allows participants to learn about the Federal policy making process by participating in a simulated version of this process. The POLIGAME exercise approximates the process of resolving conflicts among various interests groups in the process of formulating public policy as it affects agriculture and agricultural industries.

Participants learn about these processes of conflict resolution and policy formulation by advancing the positions held by numerous groups of actors in the Federal policy process. These include career civil servants, congressmen, White House executives, and representatives of various organized interest groups. At the outset, no single group or individual has sufficient power to impose his or her objectives on the rest of the participants. The objectives held by different persons are not always compatible. Through logical arguments and political bargaining, participants attempt to win support for their positions. The exercise ends with participants developing and submitting one or more legislative proposals, each supported by a block of participant votes.

POLIGAME is designed to help you understand the organization and the operation of the Federal government as it relates to the formulation of public policy. It will assist you in understanding the role of politics in resolving conflicts within the process of policy formulation, the limits of rational decision making, the tensions between various interest groups and governmental agencies over the control of public policy, and help sharpen your skills in analyzing the consequences of alternative public policies relative to achieving specified and often conflicting goals.

Section II: Groups and Persons Represented

Following is a list of the persons who will be represented by the participants in POLIGAME, along with a general description of the nature of the group with which they sit. At the outset of the game, the instructor will distribute to each group the specific objective for which it is expected to fight. Because of the make-up of the groups it is not unlikely that some of the participants may break with their group in the process of achieving their objective.

Group I - The U.S. Department of Agriculture

Traditionally, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has been a "clientele" department, serving the needs of farmers and others in the agricultural community. Its methods for enlisting the support of its clientele in the formulation and execution of policy - methods such as the use of farmer elected advisory committees - have been copied widely by other Federal agencies serving specified clientele groups. In recent years, as the farm population has declined in relative political importance, the USDA has expanded into new programs with new clientele - low income adults, school children, hungry Asians, Chinese and Russians, rural homeowners, businessmen in small towns, and consumer groups in general. Despite these new clientele, however, the USDA still retains its character as a "department of farmers."

- 7
- Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture (Vacant)
 - / Undersecretary for International Affairs (Acting Secretary) ✓
 - // Assistant Secretary for Consumer Services ✓
 - Assistant Secretary for Marketing Services ✓
 - // Administrator, Farmer Cooperative Service ✓
 - / Administrator, Economic Analysis Division ✓
 - Administrator, Marketing Orders Division ✓ *Mark Stokely*
 - General Counsel ✓

Reduce the visibility of the activities of the Dept. in generating upward pressure on food prices while increasing or strengthening the ability of farmers to receive equitable prices.

Groups II - Traditional Agricultural Clientele

The traditional clientele of the U.S. Department of Agriculture are organized in many different ways - in broad scale groups such as the American Farm Bureau Federal, or in specific organizations representing a certain groups of producers such as the National Milk Producers Federation. Sometimes the objectives of broad scale farm groups conflict with the interests of the specific groups. All of these organizations are well financed and have lobbyists who are experienced at influencing governmental policy. These organizations view the USDA as "their department" and are generally opposed to any policy change which would reduce their influence over agricultural affairs. In general, they want farm prices to stay ahead of production costs and are committed to whatever government policies are necessary in order to accomplish this.

- 7
- Representative, National Grain and Feed Association ✓
 - Representative, National Milk Producers Federation ✓
 - Representative, American Agricultural Movement ✓
 - // Representative, American Farm Bureau Federation ✓
 - Representative, National Farmers Union ✓
 - / Representative, National Cattlemen's Association ✓
 - Representative, U.S. Feed Grains Council ✓

Eliminate the right of agricultural producers to join together for purposes of marketing their products, planning and carrying out production, allocating production, and relating to markets.

Group III - New Agricultural Clientele

A number of factors in recent years have broadened the clientele of the Department of Agriculture, making it much less of a "department of farmers." Responsibility for the administration of Federal food programs has increased the role of the department as a social welfare agency. The political impact of food as an economic resource in a hungry world has given the department increased international responsibilities. The impact of food prices on inflation has given the department a prominent role in macroeconomic policy. Expansion of the department's rural development programs have placed it in competition with the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Environmental Protection Agency. Its role in protecting food safety and quality have caused many persons to look to the department for nutritional leadership. With these changes have come new clientele who want to influence USDA policy in different ways.

- 7
- / Representative, Consumers Federation of America ✓
 - Representative, Common Cause ✓
 - Representative, Consumers Union of the United States ✓
 - /// Representative, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization ✓
 - /// Lobbyist for the developing nations that purchase grain and rice from the United States ✓
 - // Investigative Reporter, Washington Post ✓
 - Representative, Agri-Business Accountability Project ✓
 - Author of the report titled "Food For People, Not Profit" ✓

*Ministry of Agriculture
/ working power on
- low price and
quality of food*

Group IV - The National Antitrust Lobby

There is an informal coalition of people who are interested in more effective and expedient enforcement of antitrust policy in the United States. This group has been concerned with two basic problems: The long period of time required, or outright inability of government to successfully pursue antitrust litigation against the giant corporations in the U.S., and the exemptions provided in law from the general provisions of the antitrust statutes for certain groups. In particular, they have expressed continual opposition to what they perceive to be exemptions for agricultural producers and other farm related organizations, particularly farm cooperatives and market orders. In an interesting paradox, this group has shown relatively little concern for the antitrust exemptions enjoyed by organized labor.

- 7
- / Attorney General of the United States ✓
 - Assistant Attorney General, Anti-Trust Enforcement ✓
 - Chairman, Federal Trade Commission ✓
 - /// Director, Competition Division, FTC ✓
 - / Chairman, Council on Wage and Price Stability ✓
 - Chairman, National Commission For Review of Antitrust Laws and Procedures
(U.S. Senator, Democrat, Ohio, Chairman of the Senate Judiciary
Subcommittee on Anti-Trust Policy and Procedure) ✓
 - Chairman, U.S. House of Representatives Judiciary Committee ✓
(Democrat, New Jersey)

*Facilitate
effective anti-trust
policy among farmer
cooperatives and
food marketing
boards
(Benny McMillan)*

Group V - The Food Industry Lobby

The large food manufacturing, processing and retailing corporations present a strong but independent voice in the Federal policy development process. In general, this group opposes government intervention and regulation in the food industry, resists policies which enhance prices for farm products, and generally aligns with other industrial interests in the country. However, close cooperation or coordination among the various participants in this group is seldom observable except when the food industry or industrial sector at large is threatened by massive government regulation.

- 7
- // Chairman, General Food Corporation ✓
 - // President, Kellogg of Battle Creek ✓
 - / General Council, Associated Milk Producers, Inc. ✓
 - / Executive Director, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives ✓
 - / Executive Vice President, Hunt and Wesson Foods ✓
 - / Director, Public Relations, Iowa Beef Processors, Inc. ✓
 - / Executive Director, Food Marketing Institute ✓
 - / Vice President and Corporate Economist, Borden, Inc. ✓

*Examine Report any special
committee attention on
certain anti-trust rules
- particularly on procedure
- how any application
against food industry
is handled*

Group VI - Committee on Agriculture, U.S. House of Representatives

The committee on Agriculture in the POLIGAME exercise represents the various congressional committees which oversee the different programs and policies which impact upon the agricultural community. It combines the functions of several congressional committees including agriculture, interior, judiciary, commerce and consumer affairs (since no money is being appropriated as part of POLIGAME, only the work of substantive committees is relevant and appropriations are excluded). In the real world, these different committees function in roughly the same way. Each congressman specializes in a particular program or policy area. Rarely does one congressman interfere in another's area of specialization. Working together is emphasized and partisanship is discouraged. The Chairman generally seeks to gain committee consensus before moving ahead on an issue, especially after the Democratic Caucus deposed the chairman of a committee who the committee members felt was too old and autocratic. Reapportionment has significantly reduced the power of the farm block and the committee is now more responsive to consumer interests and other nontraditional points of view. It is, none the less, still a friend of agriculture in general.

- 7
- / Chairman, House Agriculture Committee (Democrat, Washington) ✓
 - / Ranking Minority Member (Republican, Oklahoma) ✓
 - / Ranking Majority Member (Democrat, Georgia) ✓
 - Majority Member (Democrat, Minnesota) ✓ (Scott Wilson)
 - /// Majority Member (Democrat, New York) ✓
 - /// Minority Member (Republican, Ohio) ✓
 - / Chief Staff Economist (Democrat, Former Chief Economist, National Farmers Union) ✓

Subcommittee - to manage food prices in the U.S. by influencing competition (market) to have - throughout the world - food in 1967

Group VII - The White House

The attitude of the President toward agricultural policy, anti-trust policy and competitions policy is inseparable from the leadership role he must play in international affairs, his need to improve the economy and promote economic stability, and his basic commitment to reforms in government policy and program performance through reorganization of the Federal bureaucracy. In particular, he supports the transformation of the Department of Agriculture into a Department of Food and Agriculture and the transfer of many of the responsibilities currently held by the Secretary of Agriculture for regulating competitive behavior in the agricultural industries to the Department of Justice.

- 7
- / President of the United States (Democrat) ✓
 - Director, Office of Management and Budget ✓
 - Director, Domestic Council ✓
 - Chairman, Council of Economic Advisors ✓
 - Special Assistant For Consumer Affairs ✓
 - Special Assistant For Congressional Relations ✓
 - Secretary of State ✓ Tim Moore

consultation all Reg. of comp. in Justice Dept.

Section III: The Omnibus Agricultural Antitrust Act of 1979

Participants in POLIGAME are asked to gather support for an Omnibus Agricultural Antitrust Act. You are not asked to formally enact the bill nor are you required to appropriate money to pay for its enforcement. Rather, the game is solely concerned with gathering sufficient support to assure passage.

To gather support for passage of the Act, you will have to persuade other groups and participants in POLIGAME to accept your objective and proposed policies. No single group has the power to dictate a solution on their own terms, not even the President of the United States. During the primary of 1952, then President Harry S. Truman, would sit at his desk and contemplate the problems that General Eisenhower would face if he won the nomination and the election. "He'll sit here," Truman would remark, "And he'll say, 'Do this, do that,' and nothing will happen." Reflecting upon his seven years as the nation's Chief Executive, Truman would add, "I sit here all day trying to persuade people to do the things they ought to have sense enough to do without my persuading them. That's all the powers of the President amount to."

Each group in POLIGAME has its own independent base of power - the President has his "mandate," the congressmen have the voters in their districts, the bureaucrats have their expertise, the lobbyists have the constituents, the investigative reporter has his readers and so on. Moreover the American political system is set up with its division of powers and checks and balances to prevent any one group from dominating the whole of the process. Your success in POLIGAME will depend upon your ability to persuade and influence these participants.

To assure passage of the Omnibus Agricultural Antitrust Act (and your objective within it) you must strive to form a coalition consisting of more than a majority of participants. The larger the number of participants who support an Act that encompasses your objective, the greater the number of points you score in the exercise. It is sufficient to say that no possible coalition is precluded. The American political system contains plenty strategies for enacting a policy provided that sufficient support has been marshalled behind a specific plan. Your job is to marshall that support behind a plan or an act that achieves your objective.

Why is an Omnibus Agricultural Antitrust Act necessary?

At least since the passage of the Capper-Volstead Act in 1922, parts of the agricultural community have been treated uniquely under the antitrust laws of the United States. The Capper-Volstead Act specifically exempts farmers from the provisions from the Sherman Antitrust Act and in general has been interpreted as exempting farmer cooperatives from the anti-merger provisions of the Clayton Act and perhaps from other antitrust policies.

The Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 establishes a mechanism for creating marketing orders and agreements for agricultural products which, in themselves, are exceptions to antitrust law. Under the marketing orders and agreements provisions of law, the Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to specify certain industry-wide or market-wide behavior for all participants in certain agricultural markets, thus putting the Federal government directly in the role of establishing and maintaining cartel-type market structure and behavior.

Considerable market concentration has occurred in food manufacturing, processing and retailing and in farm production input manufacturing and distribution since World War II. With the exception of certain mergers among dairy processing firms that have been blocked by the Justice Department, Federal antitrust policy has had relatively little impact on this concentration of economic power in the U.S. Food system.

Foreign trade has become a significant factor in the demand for agricultural products in the United States and a major factor in U.S. international policies of detente and non-military aid to developing nations. Yet, the exports of agricultural products are dominated by five very large multi-national, U.S. based firms that account for an estimated 90% of all U.S. agricultural exports.

Much concern has been expressed by consumer groups, the Council on Wage and Price Stability, The Treasury Department and others relative to the impact of food prices on family budgets, inflation, and overall economic conditions. Accusing fingers are frequently pointed at both large farmer cooperatives and large food processing and retailing firms as a source of excess price escalation.

Both the White House and Congress have undertaken studies to examine the implications of antitrust exemptions or ineffective antitrust enforcement in the agricultural and food sector. Both have recommended changes in U.S. antitrust policy relative to food and agriculture.

Consumer groups have laid claim to their right to be represented in agricultural policy with the establishment of an assistant secretary for consumer affairs in the Department of Agriculture.

Hanging over all of these issues and concerns is the problem of reorganization of the Federal government. It is fair to say that the Department of Agriculture has been the target for more unrealized reorganization plans than any other major Federal agency. Much controversy has been generated over the question of whether the Department of Agriculture should be a Department of Farms, a Department of Rural Development, a Department of Food, or a Regulatory Agency, or whether its current market regulatory activities should be transferred to such agencies as the Department of Justice or the Federal Trade Commission.

To emphasize the issues of reorganization, the POLIGAME exercise begins without a Secretary of Agriculture, the last one having resigned for reasons of health (something he ate, we suspect). During the game the President may appoint any other player to this position. Senate confirmation is assumed and the player so appointed brings all of his support and prestige with him.

Section IV: Rules of the Game

The rules of POLIGAME generally conform to the rules of the American political system although the process has been simplified to expedite the process of the exercise and to facilitate a scoring process for individual participants.

Scoring: As in the real world, the objective of POLIGAME is to get your objective incorporated into the version of the Omnibus Agricultural Antitrust Act which you support, and to get that Act supported by as many other participants as possible. The objectives are assigned to each group immediately prior to the beginning of the POLIGAME exercise by the instructor.

In addition to achieving support for your position, each group must prepare a strategy for winning support for its objective. At the outset of the game, each group must rank the other six groups beginning with the group whose support you will spend the most time pursuing and ending with the group whose support you do not expect to get. The first, second and sixth names on this list are submitted to the instructor at the end of the first POLIGAME session. The first and second named groups will be considered those whose support you are expecting to enlist on your behalf and the sixth group is considered from be the one from which you will have little, if any, support.

A maximum of 36 points can be earned by participants in POLIGAME. A maximum of 18 of these 36 points can be earned by individual action and the remaining 18 points are earned through group action in the exercise.

Individual points are earned as follows:

- a. 9 points if your individual power voucher is attached to a draft of the Omnibus Agricultural Antitrust Act which incorporates policies that will achieve the objective assigned to your group, and;
- b. 3 points are earned for having your power voucher attached to a draft Act that is supported by not less than 30% or more than 39% of the total number of power vouchers outstanding, or;
- c. 6 points are earned for having your individual power voucher attached to a draft Act which has not less than 40% or more than 49% of the total number of outstanding power vouchers attached, or;
- d. 9 points are earned for having your individual voucher attached to a draft Act which has the support of 50% or more of the outstanding power vouchers.

Group points are earned as follows:

- a. each member of a group earns 9 points if a majority of the outstanding power vouchers from that group are attached to a draft Act which is supported by 60% or more of the total number of vouchers outstanding among all participants. That is, you must gather enough support for your plan to propel it past the various obstacles lurking in the American political system. Therefore, a simple majority of the power vouchers will not be sufficient. You must collect more than a majority to assure passage of your proposal. An extraordinary majority assures you that the potential opponents of the plan (even the President) will not be able to veto or hamstring the bill. You're only concerned with gathering the necessary support. A smaller number of points can be earned if a majority of your group supports a legislative proposal which is supported by less than 60% of all participants;
- b. 6 points will be earned if between 45% and 60% of the total participants support your group's proposal, and;
- c. 3 points if between 30% and 45% of the total participants support your proposal;
- d. each group will earn 3 points for forming coalitions with each of the two groups identified in your first strategy session and an additional 3 points for not forming a coalition with the group whose support you least expected to receive. A coalition is defined as the attachment of a simple majority of the power vouchers from members of another group to the same draft Act that includes support by simple majority of the members from your group.

Power: Power in the POLIGAME exercise is represented by a white ballot known as a "power voucher." At the outset of the game, each participant will receive a power voucher. These belong to the individual and not to the group. Participants register their support for a legislative plan or proposed Act by attaching their power voucher to it. Participants may also sign their power vouchers over to another individual who will represent them in final deliberations. To do this, the power voucher must be endorsed as one would sign over a check.

Once the power voucher is attached to a plan or draft Act, or signed over to another individual, it cannot be retrieved. Because of this, it is expected that participants will be reluctant to part with their power vouchers until the very end of the game. To facilitate progress, each participant is also provided a colored ballot, the "power pledge", which allows him to pledge support to a plan or to an individual without surrendering his power voucher. Conditions may be attached to the power pledge. If the person or group holding the pledge violates these conditions, the participant may refuse to surrender his power voucher.

Participants should remember that their primary mission is to get their objective or positions adopted in a draft legislative Act that has majority support attached to it. This does not mean that the primary mission is to collect power vouchers. Technically, it does not matter who gathers the power vouchers so long as your position is contained in the draft Act that has your power voucher attached to it.

Number of power vouchers outstanding: _____

Section V: Schedule of Events

During the POLIGAME exercise, participants will hold strategy sessions with their own group, caucus with their allies, participate in formal hearings, engage in informal negotiations and may be asked to send representatives to conference negotiations requested by other groups. In the real world, these procedures would consume from 6 to 18 months of bureaucratic and legislative activity. The POLIGAME exercise is geared to be completed in about 10 hours with participants adhering to the following schedule of events:

1. First Caucus: (2 hours) Each of the seven groups caucuses by itself. No group may meet with any other until the initial caucuses by each group have occurred. During this caucus, each group will receive their objective to be sought in the final legislative Act and each group will rank the other groups in regard to forming or not forming coalitions. During this first caucus, each group should do the following:
 - A. Discuss the objective given to it by the POLIGAME instructor,
 - B. Formulate a rough outline of the policies which could be incorporated into the legislative Act to achieve this objective,
 - C. Plan a strategy for winning support of other participants for policies which will achieve your objective,
 - D. Groups that will be conducting hearings must decide the basic strategy to be pursued in the hearing, who to call as outside expert witnesses and what line of questioning will be pursued by each member of the group in the process of the hearing,
 - E. Groups who will not be holding a hearing must decide who will represent the group at each scheduled hearing, what testimony will be offered initially in each of the hearings, and outline the major lines of analysis and policy positions that will be forwarded in the process of responding to questions directed at your representative during the hearings.

2. Formal Hearing: (1.5 hours) The first formal hearing will take place in the U.S. House of Representatives (Committee on Agriculture). The chairman of this hearing will be the Chairman, House Agriculture Committee. The chairman will be expected to make a preliminary statement as to the purpose of the hearing and can make a policy position statement, at his discretion. Following the chairman's opening statement he can question one witness or call for prepared testimony from one person on his committee. Following the first testimony, the ranking minority member of the House Agriculture Committee must be given the opportunity to make a prepared statement and to question one invited witness or call upon another member of the committee to make a prepared statement. Following that, questions can be directed by anyone on the committee to any witness and any committee member may make a policy statement. At least one witness must be called from each of the six other groups. No prepared statement may exceed five minutes. It is up to the chairman of the committee to select the order in which members of the committee have the floor, either for presenting statements or questioning witnesses. However, he must assure that in the duration of the hearing, each member of the committee has at least one opportunity to speak or to question witnesses. Remember, the purpose of the hearing is to help participants search for common areas of agreement. Make your positions known but do not reveal too much.

3. Strategy Session: (30 minutes) Following the first formal hearing, a period will be provided for each group to caucus and revise their strategies and plans based upon the outcome and testimonies offered in the first hearing.

4. Formal Hearing: (1.5 hours) The second formal hearing will take place in the Department of Agriculture. This hearing will be chaired by the Secretary of Agriculture, or in the case of vacancy, the Acting Secretary. The rules of procedure are identical to those for the first formal hearing, however, the Chairman can delegate to another member of the group responsibility for making the opening statement, and there is no one in the group that has a unique right to make the second or minority statement.

5. Strategy Session: (30 minutes) Following the second formal hearing, a strategy session will be provided for each group to caucus and again revise their strategies and plans based upon the outcome of the second hearing.

6. Formal Hearing: (1.5 hours) The third formal hearing will take place in the White House. It will be chaired by the President. The rules of procedure are identical to those for the second hearing.

7. Strategy Session: (30 minutes) At the end of the third formal hearing, time will be provided for each group to caucus in a final strategy session.

8. Final Caucus: (2 hours) last session in the POLIGAME exercise is set aside for finalizing the draft legislative Act, soliciting support, and transmitting that plan to the POLIGAME instructor. The specific steps that should be considered in the final caucus include the following:

- A. Strategy Session - Each group should caucus and decide if it wants to join forces with other groups in drafting a proposed Act, or to draft a plan independently and then secure power vouchers from other participants.

- B. Drafting the Plan - At this point the groups who have found allies must meet and write down on paper their points of agreement and disagreement. Groups that are not part of coalitions must proceed with drafting their own legislative Act. Care must be taken in this process that the conditions attached to power pledges which have been accumulated in support of a coalition's plan must be embodied in the draft Act or the actual power voucher may be lost. The major policies in the draft legislative plan should be specified on paper at this point and an enumeration of the expected number of power vouchers which will support this plan should be made.
- C. Conference Negotiations - If, after drafting an Act and counting the expected number of power vouchers in support of that Act, the group or coalition decides it does not have an adequate amount of support for its plan in order to assure passage or at least to earn the desired number of points, then conferees should be appointed to negotiate with other groups or coalitions. No more than two conferees should be appointed from each group or coalition that meets for conference negotiations. The idea is to work out a compromise between two or more groups or coalitions for joint support for a single Act. This compromise should be worked out in front of the other participants by the conferees but the other participants are expected to remain silent during the conference negotiations.
- D. Submitting the Legislation - Once all negotiations have been completed, all coalitions formed, and all agreements have been set forth, the final draft of the proposed legislation must be set forth on paper. As soon as this plan is set forth on paper it is time to attach to it power vouchers from individual participants. At the conclusion of this session all power vouchers must be attached to some legislative Act and these, in turn, must be turned in to the instructor. No power vouchers will be accepted unless they are attached to a legislative Act and no power vouchers will be accepted after the conclusion of this final POLIGAME session. The final legislative plans submitted, with the power vouchers attached, can be hand written outlines identifying the major policies and procedures included in the proposed Act. It is not necessary to spell out in detail the rules that you would expect to be adopted in the process of implementing your policies and procedures. Rather, the intent is to set forth the policies and procedures which are being forwarded in order to achieve the desired objectives.
- E. Supporting Your Act - The POLIGAME instructor will judge the extent to which the policies and procedures put forth in each Act will achieve the objectives assigned to the various groups of participants who support each Act with their power vouchers. However, each group or coalition submitting an Act has the option of providing a statement with the logic of why you believe these policies and procedures will achieve the desired objectives. These supporting statements can be submitted to the instructor anytime within two days following the submission of the draft Act. However, it must be indicated with the submitted Act whether or not a supporting document will be provided to the instructor.

Note: It is expected that informal negotiations among groups and individual participants will occur throughout the duration of the POLIGAME exercise. It is through this process of informal negotiations when much of the basis for coalitions and agreement in principle will probably be identified. Remember, you can use your power pledges at any time including informal negotiations to pledge your support for a particular policy and you can attach conditions to your pledge. However, you should turn over your power voucher to another person, to a group, or to a coalition only when you are confident that it will be attached to a draft Act that is consistent with your interests.